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It is often difficult to find interesting material for remedial reading programs. Students over fourteen years of age, but still in grammar school, found newspapers to contain interesting and practical material. Because of the great variety of articles contained therein, newspapers are relevant to every area of the elementary curriculum. They can be used for teaching reading techniques, vocabulary building and other aspects of the language arts program. Articles are likewise relevant to instructional programs in social studies, geography, history, arithmetic, science, and guidance. Information is given concerning implementation of the newspaper program in an elementary class of 14 to 16 year old pupils in the Stephen A. Douglas School in Chicago, Illinois. Many suggestions to the teacher are made concerning the uses of the newspaper as supplementary curriculum. (Included is a bibliography of books or booklets on teaching about or through the newspaper.)

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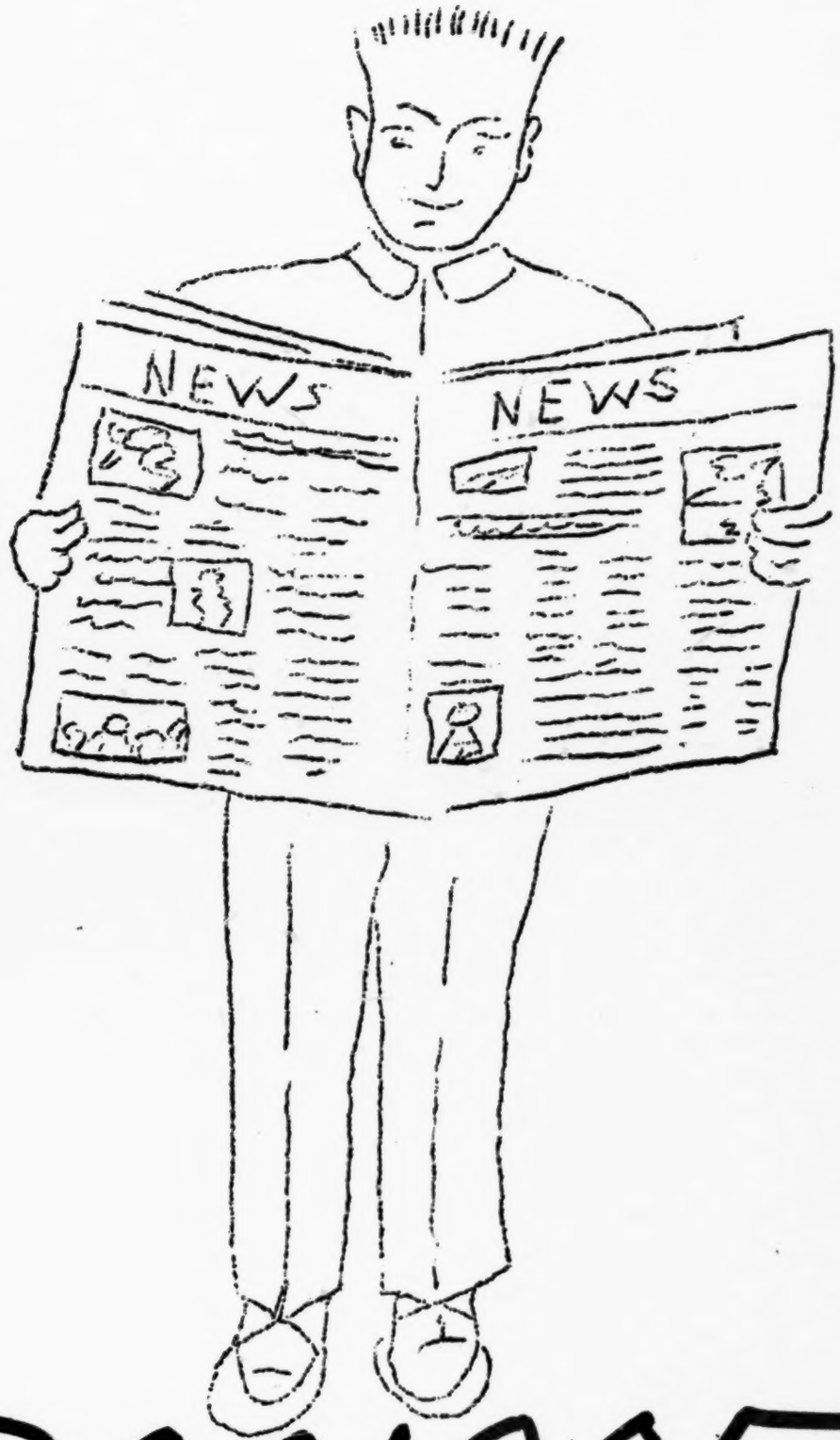

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CHICAGO PROJECT GREAT CITIES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

A UNIT FOR THE CLASSROOM TEACHER

DEVELOPED IN THE STEPHEN A. DOUGLAS SCHOOL

CHICAGO PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Classroom Teacher

PREFACE

As part of a study carried on in the fourteen largest cities of the United States, an experimental program was introduced in District Eleven, in September, 1960, involving pupils 14 years of age or older, who were still in elementary school. Pupils from eight schools were grouped into special classes in three centers. Later these classes were consolidated into one center at the Stephen A. Douglas School.

Many of these overage pupils had become discouraged because of failure and lack of success. They were potential drop outs, if not in elementary school, then in high school. For this reason it was essential that they be encouraged to remain in school. In an effort to improve the attitudes of these pupils, as well as to increase their academic achievements so that they might successfully meet the challenge of the high school curriculum, it was felt that new approaches to learning should be considered.

Teachers working with these potential drop outs have experimented with various types of teaching techniques, as well as with subject matter geared to meet the needs and achievement levels of these pupils.

The unit on The Newspaper - A Living and Dynamic Text, developed by Mr. John Jefferson is an attempt to acquaint pupils with the tremendous amount of material and information contained in the daily newspaper. The material in the newspaper is not only presented in an interesting manner, but it is ever changing and always up-to-date. Pupils do not tire of using this material, as is so often the case with text book materials. As a supplement to regular text books, the newspaper is invaluable.

It is felt that the materials developed are such that this unit could be of value to other teachers with various types of pupils. It can be expanded or curtailed to meet the needs of any particular group. It is with this thought in mind that it is presented for your consideration.

WALTER R. FASAN
Principal
Stephen A. Douglas School

OVERVIEW

For millions of adult Americans, the newspaper is the only source of their printed information. The school that neglects news reading and those skills which must be taught to get the most out of this adult medium of communication, is derelect in its duty to society. Children have a natural interest in the world around them. It behooves us to build up the desire to become better informed citizens. Every man should be capable of discriminating reading of the press.

Thomas Jefferson said, "When the press is free and every man is able to read, all is safe."

The habit of newspaper study cannot be learned in a unit of two or three weeks, but must grow and expand over the years under school leadership. The youth of America should learn how to read newspapers intelligently in order to know what goes on in the world, so as to be able to think and act intelligently on that knowledge. The newspaper has been called the "poor man's university" and because it is an up-to-the-minute history of current events, it is a university in print.

The Guy Gannett Publishing Company of Portland, Maine lists six basic ways a newspaper serves its readers. These are:

1. Reporting news.
2. News interpretation.
3. Service to advertisers.
4. Service to readers.
5. Assuming the responsibility of leadership.
6. Being stimulating and entertaining.

Newspapers should not supplant, but should supplement textbooks. In this unit we will suggest specific ways of making them into valuable teaching aids. We found this material practical and stimulating to the pupils. We hope it will fire the imagination of the teacher to enrich the classroom in every course of study. While good textbocks provide a foundation for study, we are aware that they cannot keep abreast of new information. The newspaper can be used by the teacher as a vital, alive, and practical way of living. Material from it should provide the practical application of the subject studied.

Maps, charts, cartoons, and pictures are all used by news agencies to show us events of the world. Each of these has advantages over the printed word. Students need experience in using and interpreting them. Collecting, organizing, and using information, is an important skill needed in adulthood. Most adult experiences of a political nature, latest scientific information, international problems, and many kinds of social actions are experienced vicariously through reading. It takes imaginative teaching on our part to train teenagers to build up concepts of this kind. The newspaper is the best medium for developing concepts beyond personal experience.

Mr. John Jefferson, a teacher at the Stephen A. Douglas School Special Project which is part of the "Great Cities School Improvement Program", uses newspapers daily for some part of his teaching program. He has written specific suggestions in the belief that all teaching can be improved with this medium.

HELEN F. ISBITZ
Assistant Principal

THE NEWSPAPER - A LIVING AND DYNAMIC TEXTBOOK

Introduction:

After considering the various media and materials available for a program of intensive reading improvement, and taking into consideration the diversified experiences of our fourteen through sixteen year old pupils with their variation in reading achievement, it was decided to use the newspaper as a textbook. Newspapers are inexpensive and current. Textbooks age quickly in these lightening-change times and it becomes necessary that teachers supplement yesterday's textbooks with today's news. They serve also to bridge the gap between classroom ideals and the reality of living. To learn what to do about the problems of living, to appraise the good in men's lives and separate it from the evil, are but a few of the techniques that critical reading of the news can reveal and develop.

A class size set of newspapers was ordered, to be delivered once a week. The pupils were given an opportunity to browse at will through the paper for about ten minutes. The purpose of this was to permit the boys and girls to satsify their curiosities in the areas of their greatest immediate interest. It also gave the teacher opportunity to observe the spread of interest and the attention paid to all sections of the paper. Some turned to the comic section, others to sports, a few to horoscopes, and even fewer to more serious columns pertaining to current world affairs and/or civic and educational news.

As a starting point in building a closer bond between what the curriculum offers and the interest of the pupils, we clipped names of foreign countries from the paper. These were usually names in the

headlines. Each pupil had a country and his assignment was to find in the paper news items, maps, and pictures which would add to his knowledge. The pupils found that they had to make use of other material such as sets of encyclopedias for background in order to report more extensively. This "looking-up" skill is an important phase of our reading program.

It was also necessary to use a dictionary to look up meanings of words unknown to them, thus making use of another skill needed for comprehension of reading material. The papers serve as a remedial reading tool.

Having aroused the interest of the pupils in using the paper, we asked a series of questions to emphasize the value of this mass medium of learning, to direct thinking, and to focus attention on reading for self improvement. Here are the questions and answers:

Question: "If you had only one thing to teach you, why would you choose to buy a newspaper?"

Answers: "Newspapers are not expensive."
"They are up-to-date. You can read about things as soon as they happen."
"They give you information you can't find in books."

Question: "What kinds of information would this be?"

Answers: "The latest weather reports."
"Current events in the city, the country, and the world."
"New inventions and discoveries."
"Better ways of doing things."
"Health information."
"Information about the latest styles, prices, and where to shop."
"Etiquette and good manners."
"Where to go for a job."
"How to be a good citizen."
"Who the important people are everywhere on earth and how they live."

Question: "How can a paper tell you how to live?"

Answers:
"They tell you when you must register to vote."
"New Health information like polio vaccine."
"Changes in laws."
"When there is an epidemic, you can read what to do and what to expect."
"What to do to protect yourself and your family from fall-out."
"How to prepare food."
"How to make things to use around the house and how to take care of your things."
"The best places to shop to get the most for your money."
"Newspapers help you so that you are not ignorant."

Question: "What kinds of things must you know so that you will not be ignorant?"

Answers:
"Foreign news."
"National news."
"Local news."
"Ideas from columns."
"The editorial page tells what the writers think and ideas of the editors."
"Information about sports."
"Information about entertainment, such as, shows, plays, art, music concerts, opera, and the ballet."
"Advertisements."

Question: "Is there more than one kind of advertisement?"

Answers:
"Stores have advertisements about sales. They give prices and tell you where to get a bargain."
"The advertising section tells about things for sale like cars, houses, used merchandise, and even a lost and found column."
"Employers advertise for help."
"People who need jobs can advertise."
"There are advertisements that tell about travel and vacations."

We would like to suggest this question and answer technique as a means of motivation and to apprise pupils of little known but available reports of events. The teacher may use these or other questions but it is important that attention be directed to content. Questions serve to call attention to the many kinds of information to be found in the newspapers. Location of an index, of special features, calling attention to placement of advertisements will be useful in the use to which papers are put in the future.

As pupils discuss the areas of learning, it would be appropriate to turn to those sections of the paper where this knowlege may be found. Instruction in location of various sections of the paper is essential. Correct folding and handling of the paper so that others may subsequently read it, is another technique of which must be learned.

It is erroneous to feel that there is anything sacred about the child's interests or that they develop spontaneously. In reality our interest is in those things which concern us. Needless to say, the above series of questions and answers stimulated our boys and girls in all areas of the curriculum. Large bulletin boards covered all available space in the room with the exception of the blackboards. The teacher used the newspaper to supplement specific activities in all content areas which helped the class gain a deeper, more meaningful understanding of the world about him. Knowledge of isolated facts does not indicate successful teaching. Using the newspaper as a medium for problem solving, clarifying relationships, and changing attitudes to get real understanding, will carry over into adulthood we think.

NEWSPAPERS AND THE LANGUAGE ARTS

READING

Newspaper headlines are like the display windows of a store. The headline tells the facts to be found in the story, in just a few words. The size and position of the headline gives a clue to the importance of the article. Pupils should be given experience in skimming over the headlines on a page to choose a story of interest. After a story is selected it should be pre-read to give a quick view of the story. If the subject is uninteresting or too difficult to understand, the pupil should skim to get another. Pre-reading of newspaper articles is easy. The headline summarizes the story and the first paragraph tells who, what, why, when, where, or how. The rest of the article fills in the details.

HOW TO SKIM

Skimming is the fastest rate of reading. It is used to find quickly what is wanted. People who have not learned to skim are unable to

finish all the reading they have to do. The ability to skim is needed in looking up telephone numbers, using tables of contents, indices, and reference materials. It is also of great help in selecting library books. When skimming is done, the eyes do not look at every word, sentence or paragraph. They move swiftly across and down one page. They then do the same on the next page. A person's eyes do this page after page, until they spot the part that they want. This part is then read carefully. In this way a newspaper of many pages can be gone over within a rather short period of time.

This technique can be used in getting information from a weather report, looking for a job in the want-ad section, reading to find a name in the obituary columns, looking for a particular radio or television program, or to find answers to specific questions. This should then be extended in the following ways with other materials: skim through the card catalog in the library to find a book on a particular topic, skim the index volume of the encyclopedia to find volume and pages for a topic in the social studies, skim the dictionary to find a word and its meaning. In all these examples it is necessary to use the alphabet. It is necessary to know the alphabet backwards and forwards, to skim efficiently in looking for specific details. One will also be able to locate quickly a name in a telephone directory, a product listed in a mail order catalog, an atlas, and an almanac.

In skimming for this kind of a detail the pupil should be told not to pay attention to every word that appears before his eyes. He should be taught to skip over many parts to find the part he wants. Newspapers supplement other media of instruction.

READING TO FIND THE MAIN IDEA

Reading to find the main idea is one of the most difficult skills that must be taught. The newspaper is valuable in this respect because headlines frequently replace topic sentences. Poor readers have difficulty in finding main ideas in paragraphs. Using an article of interest to pupils, have them pick out the central thoughts in each paragraph. By giving practice in finding the main ideas, the key to understanding will unlock the door to more efficient reading.

INCREASING SPEED

At this time it is important to point out rates of reading for various purposes. If reading is for information, reading is slow. When reading for relaxation, reading becomes more rapid. The newspaper offers the easiest way to learn fast reading. The format of newspapers with their columns makes phrase reading more easily taught. The fast reader develops a system of reading phrases, not words. Lists of phrases should be taken from the paper and the pupils asked to put an ending or a beginning to them to make sentences.

IMPROVING VOCABULARY

The ability to recognize and comprehend phrases expands the vocabulary. The dictionary should be used to look up unfamiliar words. Boys and girls should cut these from the newspaper and build up a more meaningful vocabulary. Thus each pupil has a list of words peculiarly his own. If he uses the word three times in a meaningful context, it becomes his. Thus the paper not only increases knowledge, but broadens the vocabulary.

Not only does daily reading of the paper increase the general vocabulary but because papers deal with many fields, many technical words in these fields are learned. As vocabulary is improved, reading improves.

By using curriculum guides and applying suggested techniques to reading of newspapers, most of the reading skills can be developed and improved.

THE WRITING PROGRAM

The good newspaper can enrich both oral and written language. Fundamentals should be taught from textbooks but the rules of grammer listed will be found in use in today's paper. It is possible to use the material in the news to illustrate rules and as examples of good usage. Following are some specific things to do in the program of written language:

1. Copy examples of kinds of sentences, i.e., declarative, interrogative, and exclamatory.
2. Write a digest of a news item.
3. Write a letter in answer to an ad for a job.
4. Write a menu for a meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner) using grocery ads.
5. Write a news story using the facts in a sports story, a health column, a scientific discovery, or an advice column.
6. Pretend you have something to sell. Write an advertisement.
7. Cut out a picture of interest. Write a story about it.
8. Write a letter to the editor protesting or praising the newspaper's stand on some issue of the day.
9. Write a letter of praise or criticism of a television program to the appropriate editor or feature writer.
10. As a summary of the unit on using newspapers, have the pupils write compositions about why the reading of a daily paper is important.

SOCIAL STUDIES

The proper use of the daily newspaper is the most effective single way to develop an interest in current affairs and enrich understanding of the content material in the social studies. The first duty of the newspaper is to serve the community in which it is published. In this way it becomes a factual history of the day to day life with the community. Because it must keep its readers informed, it must present a cross-section of state, national, and international news. This news is brought by world-wide news services such as the Associated Press and the United Press International. The use of the daily paper can make the difference between a course of study which is uninspiring and one that is fresh as life itself. Happenings today can be tied to the past to make a supplementary text, for it is well known that good citizens are those who know the background and philosophy of the men who founded this country. Public opinion is influenced by newspaper writers who frequently bring about reforms and solutions to political, social or economic problems.

GEOGRAPHY

In our introduction to the newspaper we illustrated one way to teach a geographic concept in order to initiate the unit on use of the newspaper. Geography shows how geographic factors shape the lives of men. Teaching through the medium of the newspaper makes it possible to apply this knowledge to present problems. We have a mobile population and in our time we are unable to predict where our youth will live in adulthood. Here are some uses and procedures to follow in reinforcing the curriculum by using the newspaper.

1. Using maps, pictures, graphs and charts. The maps should be cut from the paper and compared with world maps to give a better understanding of place, location and direction skills. If used on a bulletin board, colored string can be run from the small map to the large one. Pictures make concepts meaningful and should be discussed in relation to the news story. The ability to read and interpret a chart and a graph is a skill which can best be taught through news information which is frequently presented in chart or graph form. These are simple and easy ways to present statistical information.

Questions to ask are:

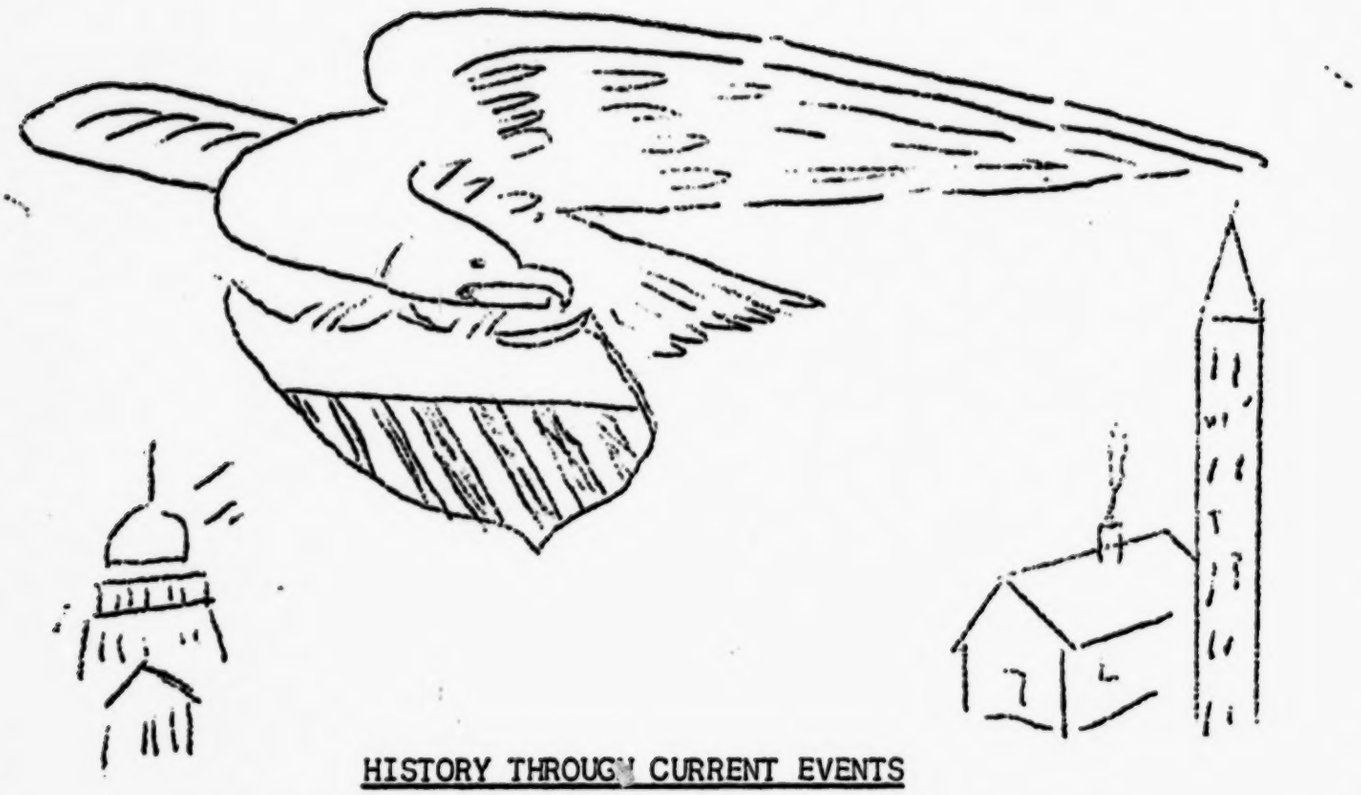
a. What is the subject of the graph?
b. What information is given?
c. What do the scales represent?
d. What symbols are used to represent different factors?

2. Build a vocabulary of geographic terms using words in news items such as cities, bodies of water, capitols, political boundaries, etc.

3. Keep a record of occurances in continuing units such as earthquakes and other natural disasters.

4. Follow on a map the route of some well known personality. Students can look up information about the country or countries visited, getting facts of geographic significance from reference books and reporting these to the class.

5. Materials needed in the classrrom to completement texts and papers are: a globe, maps, films and film strips, and the viewers. These give students additional realistic concepts.



HISTORY THROUGH CURRENT EVENTS

History gives students the benefit of man's past experience for understanding the present. Newspapers show governments in action day after day and in this respect they have a large role in shaping the future citizens of our democracy. There is an increasing need for analysis of current affairs and for pupils to get practice in determining what is good for society. The interplay of world politics is nowhere more graphically told than in the free press of this country. Discussion of these events should involve many members of the class. This requires much skill on the part of the teacher. It is advisable to use class size issues of the same edition of a paper. Questions based upon a particular article may be used to develop interest and guide the pupils from one part of the topic to the next. Good questions stimulate thinking and help the pupil look for bias. A news story does not end with one event but may involve a number of problems. As in the geography news lesson. there should be continuing units over varying periods of time.

HISTORY THROUGH CURRENT EVENTS (continued)

In history also, vocabulary development is basic to understanding. There are many abstract terms (democracy, communism) which require study. Clippings of photographs, making a chart of related headlines, explaining cartoons, are some devices which may be used. Bulletin boards can be a most effective aid in teaching events.

PRACTICAL ARITHMETIC FROM THE NEWSPAPER

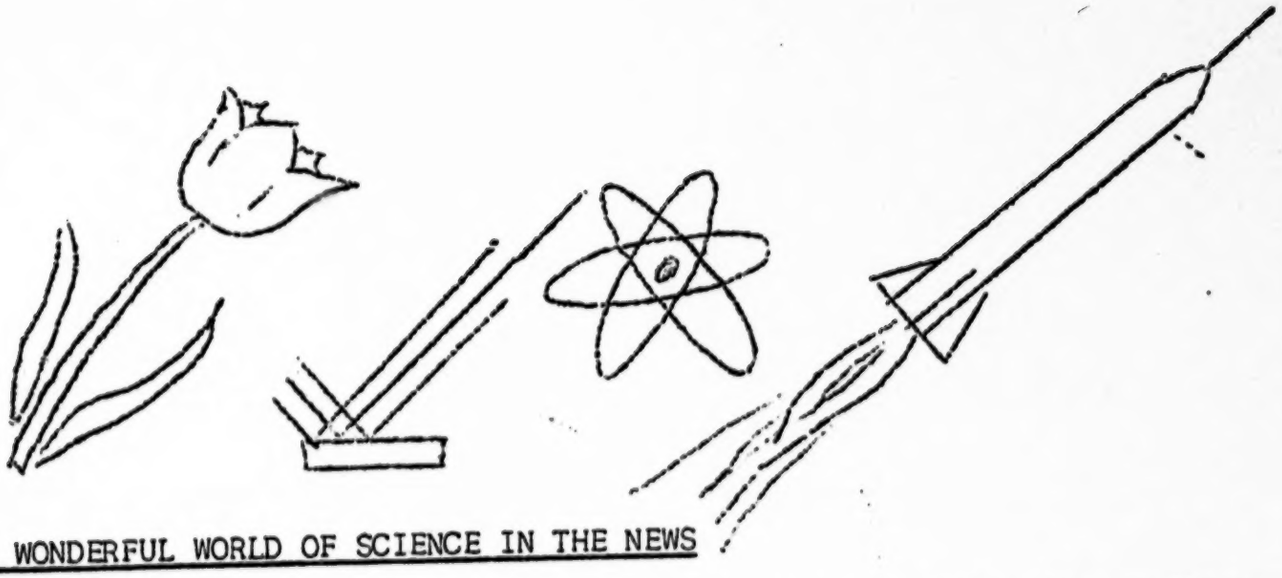
Newspapers are full of fascinating advertisements. A paper's revenue is not derived from the price readers pay for it. Most of the income comes from the sale of advertising space. People like to read advertisements, for the advertisements are news too - news of the season's latest fashions, the new car, labor saving devices, foods and so on. Advertisements are used by careful shoppers to get the most out of a budget.

Of all sections of the newspaper, the best indicator of business is the classified section. It tells the status of rental property, the state of the used car market, the progress in home building. American consumers also profit because the creation of mass demand for products makes for mass production and lower prices. They should be used to supplement mathematics text books for practical problems, since prices are current and sale items more apt to be in demand. Examples of problems are:

1. Make a grocery list for a family of four for dinner. Using food advertisements find the total cost. Insluce sales tax.

2. You have $10.00. Buy an article of clothing you need. How much change will you receive? Sales tax is 4%.

3. Your family is shopping for a used car. What is the best price for the model you want? How much will you save by buying a good used car instead of a new one?



THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF SCIENCE IN THE NEWS

With the speed of scientific development, today's textbooks are "history" before they leave the presses. The newspaper which provides its readers with carefully written articles on science is indispensable in the classroom. Science need not baffle readers for articles are written by top science reporters who are expert in writing for the layman.

Atomic power, cancer research, exploration of outer space, news of research in other fields of science, are so important that all good newspapers give them coverage. Here are some specific things to do:

1. Study weather charts, maps, and tables.
2. Cut out pictures and articles relating to a particular unit being studied. Post these on the bulletin board.
3. Write for free science materials when they are mentioned in the press. This correlates with the language arts.
4. Classify clippings on newspaper stories and file these in folders for future use.
5. Make a notebook of health hints and pictures related to health and safety.

When the first satellite rockets went into the sky and began circling the earth, the Space Age began. Who knows which of the pupils sitting in a classroom today will be on the first trip to the Moon or even to Mars?

GUIDANCE

Guidance is a broad area of living and newspapers spend vast amounts of money and reach millions of readers in bringing help to young and old of both sexes. There is no facet of life in our society which is not of some concern to columnists. Today's women's pages have a strong service element. They are filled with features and articles on diets, beauty, child care, household hints, cooking, sewing and the multitude of activities that occupy modern women. Special features are devoted to mothers, teen-agers and career women. The development of the women's section is an example of how newspapers are meeting the challenge of modern living.

The newspaper is a force whose impact has far reaching effects. Radio and television columns, health and safety features, religion and recreation, educational methods, child training and advice to the lovelorn - all are high lighted by experts in education conscious papers all over the country. Many of these features are syndicated columns and their influence on the American reading public have far reaching effects.

In a shrinking world with growing problems, the newspaper can be a force of great good because it has such tremendous power to reach and influence the mind of man. It is imperative that we use this power to develop within our pupils, a desire to read carefully and with intelligence, this dynamic force of our free press.

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